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NOTES ON GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION.

BY

RICHARD E. DODGE.

THE SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.—The school of geography at the University of Oxford has entered upon its second year, with the same staff as last year, and a much more perfect plan of work. During the Michaelmas Term of 1900 regular lectures will be given by members of the staff on the following topics: The Historical Biography of the British Islands; the Development of Geographical Ideas; the Atmospheric Circulation; the Geographical Cycle; and the Geographical Development of the Roman Empire. Practical instruction in the laboratories will be given on four days in the week.

The examination for the diploma in geography, candidates for which must have studied in residence for one academic year, was held in June, 1900. The scope of the examination is indicated by the following outline:

The figure of the earth and the determination of positions on its surface. The principles of surveying and of mapping. Map projections on the plane, the cylinder and the cone, and their commoner modifications. The reading, reduction, and generalization of maps, and the representation of climatic and statistical data. The methods of meteorological and hypsometrical observation.

The configuration of the continents and of the bed of the ocean. The characteristics, history, and distribution of the chief land-forms, of the several types of mountain-systems, river courses and river basins, and of the coastal belt. The cartographical analysis of the forms, structures, and activities of the physical regions of the world.

The distribution of solar energy on the rotating earth and the resulting circulations of air and water. The modifying effects of the distribution of land and water. The climatic provinces of the earth.

The physical conditions of the oceanic areas and the methods of observing and representing them.

The chief generalizations regarding the distribution of animals and plants.

The geographical distribution of men according to number, race, and economic and political condition. The influence of physical features in determining the position of settlements and lines of communication.

The outlines of historical geography considered in relation to the influence of physical features.

The history of geographical ideas. The outlines of the history of discovery.

It will readily be seen that the opportunities at Oxford do not as yet rival the opportunities at certain of our American universi-

ties, though more attention is given to cartographic work and to historical geography than is common with us. It is to be hoped that the work may be increased in the near future, so that students may have a more elaborate course open to them. The scholarship of £60, open to students, is a favorable sign of the support that the school is receiving.

PHYSIOGRAPHY AT THE HARVARD SUMMER SCHOOL FOR CUBAN TEACHERS IN 1900.—It is probably well known in the educational and scientific world, both here and abroad, that Harvard University opened its doors during this last summer to more than 1,200 teachers brought from Cuba to take a six weeks' course at the University. Among the subjects selected for presentation to the teachers as a whole was physiography. Lectures were given to the entire body, followed by field excursions to places of particular interest in the vicinity of Boston. The lectures dealt with the simpler phases of the science, and were given, of course, in Spanish by Mr. Mark S. W. Jefferson, of the High School, Brockton, Mass. Mr. Jefferson was eminently qualified to conduct the work, not only because of his experience as a teacher and worker in physiography, but because of his training in Spanish gained through a residence of several years at Córdoba, Argentina, where he was engaged in scientific work. References in both the lecture and field work were made to Geikie's *Nociones de Geología* and *Nociones de Geografía Física*.

The excursions were twelve in number, the body of teachers being divided into groups so that each group had two trips a week. The excursions were to Medford, Mass., to study soil and rock weathering; to Beaver Brook, to study transportation; to the Cambridge Clay Banks, to study deposition; to Atlantic, to study marine deposition; to the Cambridge Slate Quarries, to study consolidation and elevation; to Hobbs Brook, to study valley carving; to Neponset Marshes, to study river deposition; to Riverside, to study terraces; to Nantasket, to study shore lines; to Clifton, to study ocean erosion; to Arlington Heights, for a general review; and to Melrose, for a review of differential erosion.

The University published a small pamphlet in reference to the excursion, with general directions in English and Spanish; general directions as to method of observation were given in an introduction, and under each excursion a series of leading questions was asked.

The success of the work was very great, and it is a great com-

pliment to the science of physiography that this subject was selected by the Harvard planners of the school to represent the science group in the school work.

COMMERCIAL GEOGRAPHY FOR NEW YORK BUSINESS SCHOOLS.—The course in Commercial Geography outlined for the business schools of New York State by the University of the State of New York, in Bulletin 13, College Department, February, 1900, deserves more than a passing notice, because it is one of the first official publications along this line.

Ideas in reference to what should be included under the head of commercial geography are very varied, differing from the early training of the enthusiast. Publishers and teachers who are anxious to have commercial geography advance rapidly are, on the whole, uncertain of the best lines. Some believe that a commercial course should be "practical": that is, give the student an encyclopedic knowledge of the commercial possibilities of any particular area; others take the opposite position, that students should gain from the study of commercial geography not merely a series of facts connected in space only, but rather general laws and conceptions in reference to the controls of commerce the world over—in other words, that the course should be scientific rather than merely informational in character.

The course noted above belongs distinctly to the latter class, the commercial possibilities of the United States being apparently the key-thought. After a few introductory conceptions in reference to political and physical geography, the student is called on to make a careful study of the possibilities for internal commerce in the United States. Great Britain and her colonies and other countries are then considered with almost equal care.

The work is to be summarized by a study of the distribution of the more important commodities. In this section the causal idea is to be brought out in a general way. The following outline in reference to Turkey will illustrate the manner of treatment:

TURKEY (including the Levant). Raisins, cotton, tobacco, attar of roses, carpets and rugs; wool and woollens, opium, licorice root, figs; international communications; chief city; two cities of Asia Minor.

It is to be hoped that the Departments of Commerce, already established by the University of the City of New York, and projected by Columbia University, may soon bring about a much-needed improvement in the commercial education of business schools, and especially in commercial geography.

THE BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN BUREAU OF GEOGRAPHY, whose appearance was announced in this BULLETIN (XXXII, I, 1900), has now gone through three numbers, and has won its place among the attractive helps for American geography teachers. In association with the Bureau is a Committee, which arranges to exchange products between different parts of the country. The most valuable work of the Bureau thus far seems to be in securing the possibility of purchasing valuable lantern-slides at a reasonable cost. Full particulars regarding the slides, with illustrations, will be found in the first and second numbers of the *Bulletin*.

The *Bulletin* has published a number of valuable articles, which have appeared with a pleasing typography and with many illustrations. The editor is to be congratulated upon his success, and it is to be hoped that some practical results of his work may be seen in our schools in the near future.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS OUTLINED BY THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK.—The Academic Syllabus, issued by the Regents of the University of New York, has just passed through its semi-decade revision, and physical geography teaching has profited thereby. All teaching in the secondary schools of New York is largely determined by the demands of the Regents, as outlined in the syllabus, and hence those interested in special lines of educational progress welcome any advance secured each five years, because all schools concerned profit more or less thereby.

Pressure has been brought upon those in authority, within the last few years, to make the approved course in earth-science a progressive and continuous one-year course, with laboratory work. The Board has, however, outlined a twenty weeks' course in physical geography that may be followed by a twenty weeks' course in geology, thus making a one-year course in earth-science possible, though not of the strongest kind.

All geographers will not be able wholly to endorse the description of physical geography as outlined, and many will regret that the syllabus does not more strongly emphasize the necessity of a scientific and causal treatment, particularly because of the educational value of such work. The field of physical geography is outlined as follows:

"It takes up the causes that determine the configuration of land masses, the action of bodies of water, the various atmospheric phenomena, and the relations to each other of land, water and air. It also treats of geologic and astronomic relations, and deals with the physiographic influences on vegetable and animal life. It performs its highest mission, not in its treatment of inanimate nature or of soulless organisms, but in

showing that the earth exists for man, and is of interest because it constitutes his physical environment. This syllabus regards the subject from the latter point of view, and does not attempt to require the solution of the problems that are studied in the other sciences."

A strong appeal is made for the encouragement of field work, especially in connection with the physiographic processes, and a weak suggestion is made that laboratory work is a possibility. It is greatly to be regretted that the Regents have not taken a strong stand in favor of definite laboratory courses in association with lecture and text-book work. A secondary course in physical geography cannot come up to the standard of a college entrance requirement until, like the other sciences, it is studied for at least a year with laboratory work.

The following are the larger topics suggested as belonging to physical geography: The earth as a planet; its motions and the effects thereof; distribution of land and water; the properties of air; climate; the phenomena of light; winds; storms; rainfall; the composition and motion of ocean waters; the forms of the land; islands; plains and plateaux; mountains and volcanoes; wasting of the land; rivers and river valleys; springs and lakes; glaciers; distribution of plants and animals; man and nature.

It may be said that the course is a composite of old and new ideas in reference to physical geography, and that, unfortunately, unsystematic physical geography seems to have the right of way.